



# Ellington Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 118414  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291130  
**Inspection date** 23 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Kevin Hodge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	High Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		St Lawrence
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7		Ramsgate CT11 0QH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 591638
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	233	<b>Fax number</b>	01843 851552
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Derek Karkaldie
		<b>Headteacher</b>	J Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a bigger-than-average infant school. There is a wide social mix among pupils, but the majority come from backgrounds that are less well off. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Children enter the school with levels of ability which are well below those that are typical, particularly in their social and language development. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There have been three new classrooms built since the last inspection.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ellington Infant is a good and improving school. The headteacher, staff and governors have built on the school's strengths to ensure pupils' good progress. This has led to a gradual rise in standards in Years 1 and 2, which are now broadly average.

Most pupils achieve well from their low starting points, because the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the Foundation Stage, an exciting mix of activities combined with effective teaching enables children to make up ground quickly, particularly in their social development. Most reach their own targets, and, apart from in reading and writing, the nationally expected levels when they reach Year 1. Typically skilful teaching in Years 1 and 2 helps consolidate this good progress in their reading and technology work. In their number work they make particularly good progress. Their writing, science and speaking skills do not develop as quickly and, although improving satisfactorily, these are still below the levels expected. Some well-targeted teaching is tackling weaknesses in writing, but not all teaching promotes speaking skills as well for those pupils who are not as confident. The good curriculum supports work in the Foundation Stage, which links well with Year 1 activities. Some science topics lack the zest to inspire pupils' learning. Extra activities such as visits to the beach or talks from visitors help broaden pupils' outlook effectively.

As well as ensuring pupils' good achievement, the school promotes pupils' personal development and well-being with a passion and as a result they are good. Behaviour is good and pupils say they really enjoy school as they have a say in what goes on. Only a very small number find it more difficult to settle in class. Pupils' well-being, including their health and the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is a key part of the good care, support and guidance that the school provides. As one parent commented, 'The school quickly noticed when my child needed special help'. Close links with parents, most of whom express very positive views of the school, enable them to support their children's learning effectively. An enthusiastic, effective and well-informed senior team provides good leadership and management and generally has a good grasp of how to raise pupils' achievement. Checks on teaching, while regular, could be improved. Staff are supported well by a knowledgeable governing body who challenge the school conscientiously to keep it 'on track' and improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' writing skills so they can communicate more confidently and write more creatively
- increase opportunities for pupils to speak at length so they develop a wider use of vocabulary and speak with greater clarity.
- Ensure that planning in science provides pupils with exciting activities which develop their curiosity to find out more.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points, which are much lower than average, particularly in their social and language skills. Their progress is good in the Foundation stage and is consolidated in Years 1 and 2. A good range of practical activities helps them to progress well. In the Foundation Stage, good teaching using exciting activities helps children develop their social skills and edge nearer to the levels expected when they start Year 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach broadly average standards. Despite making up ground quite quickly, the pupils' writing and science abilities are still slightly lower than expected. Pupils are most confident in their number and information and communication technology (ICT) work and reach the levels expected. Most pupils talk readily, but a significant minority still find it hard to speak at length or clearly. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) achieve in line with fellow pupils, as do the few pupils with English as an additional language. Their needs are addressed quickly and effectively.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well in and around the school and their attitudes and relationships are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and results in them working together well and being considerate to others. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The recently formed school council enjoys suggesting ideas to improve school life, but is at an early stage of development. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles, although some think that certain foods should not be eaten at all, rather than sparingly. Most exercise regularly at playtimes and all pupils regularly use the new play equipment to extend their activity levels. Several fundraising events and simple responsibilities within the school successfully develop pupils' social awareness. Good links with the community, such as collecting gifts for local charities, are enjoyed by pupils and extend their outlook. Limitations in some pupils' writing and speaking skills hamper their preparation for the next step of their education, but they work well independently and with others. This helps prepare them well for their long-term future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is typically good throughout the school. Pupils learn well because of the good range of activities in most subjects. There is a good combination of practical self-chosen activities and more formal direct teaching. Although generally effective, some teaching does not always ensure sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills or widen their vocabulary. The good use of audio-visual whiteboards

throughout the school to enhance pupils' learning is a strong feature and helps motivate pupils to learn. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they respond well and work willingly together. A very small minority is easily distracted, but is handled well, often by teaching assistants who also provide good additional support for pupils with LDD. The needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language are met well. Teachers' day-to-day guidance to pupils, usually through verbal comments, is good. It is supported by helpful written comments to help pupils improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Recent reviews in planning to reflect closer links between the Reception classes and Year 1 are proving effective and ensure pupils continue the good progress made when they start school. In the Foundation Stage, topics are exciting and promote a good mix between those chosen by the children and those directed by the teachers. Many activities are practical and 'hands on'. For example, children using the school's internal phones to chat with classmates to learn about ICT caused great excitement. Pupils' reading, spelling and number skills are systematically planned for throughout the school. Grouping Year 2 pupils by ability for their English work is beginning to help match work more closely to their needs. In science planning, some activities chosen lack the spark to ignite pupils' interest and heighten their learning. There is good provision for pupils' personal development and their learning is also enriched by a suitable range of educational visits such as trips to the beach and contrasting places of worship. A range of interesting visitors, including some from Africa and the local coastguard, helps boost pupils' curiosity and broaden their outlook.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and they are taught from an early stage about the importance of supporting each other. Learning how to stay safe is high profile and pupils are clear about how to avoid dangerous situations with strangers or traffic. There are clear child protection procedures in place, overseen by governors. Regular checks are made to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' social and emotional needs. As a result pupils readily report that they feel safe and able to approach and talk with any adult if needed. The support of pupils with LDD is good, supported by effective links with parents, carers and support agencies. This ensures their needs are recognised and dealt with quickly. Pupils get a smooth start to their education and parents are pleased with the routines. As one said, 'I was impressed how quickly she settled in and started learning her basic skills'. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance and are involved well in their learning by discussing what it is the lesson is trying to achieve. This helps them know how they are progressing, but is most effective for the higher-attaining pupils. However, one pupil's noting that 'I am good at reading, but need to be a bit quicker' typifies their willingness to learn.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior staff have managed to strike a good balance between trying to remedy weaknesses in pupils' academic achievement, while improving their social development. As a result pupils' attainment is getting closer to those levels expected while ensuring that pupils become mature and independent. Good strides have been made to improve curriculum planning and accommodation for the youngest pupils. Realistic self-evaluation procedures, which include the views of parents and close assessment of pupils' progress, are helping staff and governors to target further improvement in the school's action plan. This results in clear priorities for improvement. However, checks on teaching, whilst regular and systematic, do not always pinpoint the key elements to increase pupils' learning to the next level. Governors give the school good support despite some recent changes to their membership. Their formal contacts with school are well developed and clear. Links, such as those with year groups, subjects and pupils with LDD, give governors a good 'taste' of school life. Their clear focus on improving the school's performance further enables them to be an effective 'critical friend' and ensure that the school's capacity to improve is good.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I'm writing to let you know about the findings from the inspection I carried out recently. I really enjoyed visiting you. I think that Ellington is a good school that is improving quickly. Your parents and carers agree with us that Ellington is a caring and welcoming place.

Here are some of the 'highlights':

- You make good progress in your work and get near to the levels that are expected.
- You are working hard to make the school even better.
- You said you feel safe and all the staff make sure that you do.
- Children in all classes have lots of fun, which helps your learning.
- The teachers make most lessons interesting and are good at getting you to learn in most subjects.
- Class activities are usually interesting. Special visits or people who come to assemblies make learning more fun.
- You all behave well and the school helps you to feel good about yourself.
- Your help in raising money for charities like 'Children In Need' is really good.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to make the school a nice place to be and for the school to get even better.

I have asked the school to look at these things to improve:

- To help you get even better at your writing skills like spelling and writing stories.
- To help some of you be a bit clearer when you speak in front of others and use more interesting words to explain what you mean.
- To plan science topics which make you think more and say, 'Cor! I really want to find out more about that topic'.